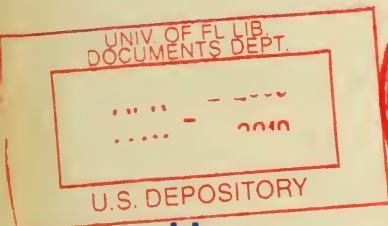


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The Challenge to Supervisors . . .



making

**YOUNG  
WORKERS**

**SAFE  
WORKERS**

I'M HAPPY TO HAVE  
YOU STARTING TO  
WORK HERE, YOUNG  
MAN !

I'M GLAD, TOO,  
SIR ... BUT  
NERVOUS !

AJAX  
COMPANY



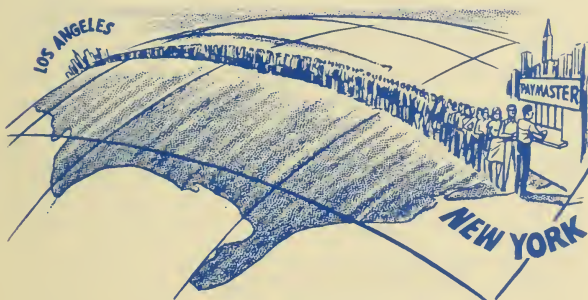
FOR A SAFER AMERICA



## The Challenge to Supervisors

# MAKING YOUNG WORKERS SAFE WORKERS

Over 5½ million youngsters under 18 step up to paymasters' windows around the Nation each year to collect wages earned on the job. If they were all to line up an arm's length apart at the same window, the line would stretch from New York to Los Angeles and 400 miles out into the Pacific!



These young people are working, learning, producing. The young worker says he "has a job," the educator speaks of his "having a learning experience," but you, the supervisor, think of him as part of the "crew" and production.

You want to be a good supervisor—one who can "work with kids." But a hundred questions go through your mind—

- How can I help these youngsters become good workers, to be safe from injury, a credit to themselves and to my employer?
- How do young workers differ from older ones?

- Would a different approach help?
- What do I have to watch for?
- Who can help me?

Many of the answers to these and other questions can be found in supervising for better safety, and this booklet can help you.

## How Safety Supervision Works

Safety supervision means giving to young workers guidance and direction which blends safety so deeply into every act that it becomes second nature in everything they do. It starts with you, the supervisor, with your personal attitude toward safety, with the importance you place upon safety in your work. It is the basic prerequisite to a safety program and one in which everyone benefits—the young worker completes his job free of injury, the employer obtains quality and quantity production at lower cost, society can look forward to a self-sustaining citizen, and you, as supervisor, have the satisfaction that comes with a job well done. You have proof of your effectiveness in handling young workers.

## Safety Emphasis Needed

The facts on injuries to young workers underscore the need for supervision geared to safety. Almost 17,000 injuries to young workers under 18 years of age were reported for an 18-month period by 28 States voluntarily reporting to the U.S. Department of Labor. This figure does not represent a nationwide experience or the total of such injuries actually occurring in these States; however, a whole series of accidental injuries were revealed that many supervisors never "figured" would happen to young people. But they did happen! The true cost to the youth, his family, the supervisor, and the employer will never be fully known. Where death resulted—as it did—no scale of values can reflect the loss. It is certain that one or more weak



links in the safety program broke down. Perhaps a supervisor did not know why young workers need special emphasis on safety.

Young people need safety supervision at work because they are **young** and **act** young. They are seeking to become adults—and **seeking** occupies much of their energy. They are preoccupied with growing, in mind and in body. Each one develops at his own unique rate.



**“ . . . AND THEY'RE ALL 16!”**

His muscle and bone development may spurt and outstrip the growth of his heart, so he tires easily; outwardly, he may appear lazy, though he is not. Coordination of newly developed muscles may be the problem—he is awkward in movement, he bumps into objects, or he may easily drop what he is carrying.

And, many a young person's mind is in a turmoil, too. Youth is his time for probing into the adult world, and the searching is intense. He wants to throw off the protective cloak of childhood, yet the transition is difficult and he is unsure. His mind may wander from his work into daydreaming, which is the only outward sign of the restless probing going on in his mind. He finds it difficult to stay interested in one job very long—there's so much to learn. He's curious; everything is interesting.

For some, taking risks becomes a challenge to be met; it's another (false) way of proving that they're "arriving" as adults, unafraid of any-



*"WHO NEEDS A LADDER ?"*

thing. A youngster's need to prove himself to himself may be so strong, in fact, that he will bet his life on chance-taking, although he may never realize that's what he's doing, or that he may pay for it the rest of his life.

In this young mind, concerned with so many problems of growing up, the pressure of adult demands may easily get lost or shunted aside. Job directions need to be stated clearly and firmly to compete with the personal thoughts preoccupying his mind. Repetition of instructions is often necessary. When a youngster must be asked repeatedly to do something, it may indicate that he didn't understand the instructions clearly the first time or, if he did, he didn't think the supervisor was serious about it. Young people, naturally, need to have instructions repeated, coupled with **firm**, consistent guidance.

There are also differences in the educational level among them which influence their ability to understand. Job directions framed in speech or writing for one level may not mean the same thing to the "slow-learner." Any worker needs to learn strange-sounding, technical language and "shoptalk," but the problem for some is heightened by language differences or limited educational opportunities. Yet the words are seemingly familiar to everyone else. Limited

mental capacity may limit the ability of a few to understand and respond quickly to directions.

A good supervisor starts by recognizing the special characteristics of young people. He knows that above all they want adult approval and want to do what is expected of them; but they may find it extremely difficult to ask "please show me how," lest it betray ignorance, open them to ridicule, or show that they are not measuring up to adult standards. Safety supervision of young people uses the techniques to which youth respond as individuals.

## How To Go About Developing Safe Attitudes

Your attitude can make the difference between success or failure in supervising young people. It is characteristic of them to select a person they respect as their model. This makes teaching easier, but it also imposes a responsibility. Once a young person has chosen a model, he patterns his thoughts and actions on what the model says and does. A supervisor should be aware that frequently he is the model selected by the young people who work for him. Thus, it becomes extremely important for him to set a good safety example and to reinforce it in every contact with the young worker. A supervisor who sets a safe example can do far more to build safety into the young worker than any number of pamphlets and talks. He



assigns young people to the kind of work they can handle safely, and he sees that they develop good habits by doing the work well. Whenever possible, he places young people under the wing of an older worker with experience and know-how during the learning period. He knows that young workers, like all humans, react more favorably when they feel wanted and respected and when success in their work is noted. As the young worker gains experience and confidence, he should be given more responsibility and voice in making suggestions for improving work procedures and safety.

A supervisor soon finds that young people respond to **firm**, just guidance and that they like to belong to a winning team. They follow him because he is the leader of their team and because they respect him. **Their** supervisor never seems to "boss them around" and is always ready to discuss job problems. Rather than use a blunt "don't" approach, he explains a safety rule, aware that this will result in cooperation, rather than resentful compliance. **Their** supervisor doesn't shout at them! If they must be reprimanded for breaking a safety rule, he tries to discuss it in private because he understands young people are particularly sensitive to criticism—this is how young workers learn that **no one** is excepted from following the safety rules. **Their** supervisor is able to instill a sense of high self-esteem in them and the idea that they can and will succeed on their job.

These are some of the ways to develop safe attitudes. Other methods are: a safety program in which young workers participate in its development; special meetings for instructions; informal contacts on and off the job; and safety promotional materials, such as literature, posters, and awards. All these approaches are blended into a basic five-step plan geared to:

- **Select** the worker for the job.
- **Tell** him how to do it.
- **Show** him how to do it.



- Test him—let him do it.
- Doublecheck his progress.

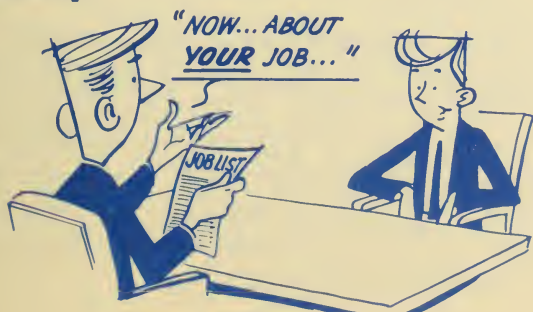
## Selecting

Selecting the right worker for the job involves considering the young worker as an individual and placing him on a job within his capabilities. Physical size, stamina, educational level, mental ability, and previous experience are matched against the job requirements, with special consideration given to the degree of independent judgment required on the job.



## Telling

The telling phase gives the young worker the information he needs to do his job properly—the details of his work, its methods and specific safety practices. The telling phase also answers the questions the young worker naturally has about what his job is, where it is, how to do it safely, who his coworkers are, where he can go for help, and what is expected of him and why.



## Showing

The next step, the showing phase, is built on the foundation laid down in the telling phase. It **demonstrates** how the work is done so the young worker actually sees all the actions involved in the job, whether it is the operation of a machine, handling boxes, using electrical gadgets, or climbing a ladder. It is at this time that the young worker begins to see that safe actions are an important **part** of his regular work procedure—to do the job in any other way is to do it incorrectly.



*" HERE'S HOW WE USE A ... "*

## Testing

While the showing phase makes the job understandable, the young worker **must** actually experience the actions if he is to learn them. In the testing phase, the young worker tries out the job actions himself, with the supervisor standing by. This is the first opportunity the young worker can actually see himself as part of the accident prevention effort.



**"NOW YOU TRY IT!"**

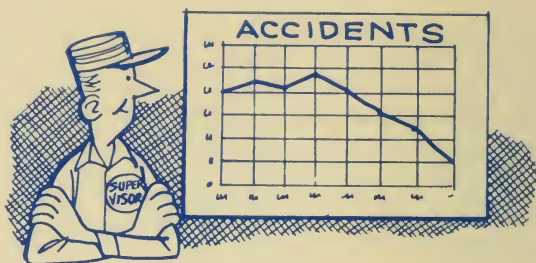
### **Doublechecking**

The actions and safe practices learned in the telling, showing, and testing phases will not become automatic immediately. The young worker will need reminders; his learning will need to be reinforced. The doublecheck phase builds repetition into the program and makes sure that the young worker gets these reminders. The last but unending phase of the training process includes checking back, observing, and evaluating the young employee's work methods to make sure that he is continuing to use the safe practices taught him. Any unsafe practices observed are discussed and corrected immediately.

### **When Is the Program Successful?**

Regardless of the size of the operation, the effectiveness of the program can be measured by how well young workers reflect safety attitudes in their speech and actions.

Do the young workers' actions reflect their belief that safety practices are an unquestioned part of their job procedures?



Do they make safety suggestions frequently and voluntarily which show they feel personally involved and responsible for safety on the job?

Do they reflect belief that safe work methods are the mark of a skilled workman?

Do they show an awareness of responsibility for the safety of their fellow workers?

Whom do they select as their model of a safe worker?

Personal observation will bring answers to most of these questions. Other answers may come from traditional "feedback"—the casual information that comes back to a supervisor through informal discussions and worker comments. A good supervisor listens for feedback.

It is up to the supervisor to judge the really meaningful indicators of progress, or the lack of them, and up to him to determine and to take the necessary corrective actions. Perhaps a problem calls for a special training session; the repetition of a previous one. In some cases, a particular worker might need reassignment to a different job or with a different group of workers. Perhaps the solution calls for outside assistance. That help is available.

## Sources of Program Assistance

Assistance in strengthening your safety program for young people may be as close as the telephone or as inexpensive as a postage stamp. Many private organizations and government agencies are ready and willing to assist in identifying safety problems and developing solutions



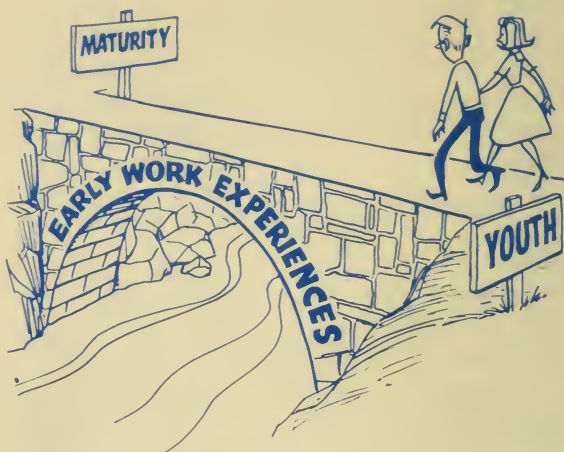
if they are only asked to do so. A phone call might bring helpful safety services and literature from a local safety council, a local chapter of the American Society of Safety Engineers, other employers and their safety engineers, or from



local business or labor groups. Industrial arts instructors in the local schools may have many excellent suggestions for other resources. State departments of labor and health frequently have staff personnel assigned to safety promotion—these persons are in a key position to know of successful ideas and where assistance might be available. The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Standards has a variety of literature available upon request which deals specifically with safety for young employees. The National Safety Council (425 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill., 60611) has a great volume of literature and other materials available at moderate cost which can aid in safety training and program promotion. Many insurance companies have safety program counseling services.

## The Supervisor's Challenge

Young people, at work or play, are in training for adulthood. It is through their first work experience that they learn some of the responsi-



bilities of maturity and become fitted to assume them. A most important influence in their early working life is the impression gained from their first work supervisor. It is he who forms one of the main bridges for their transition from young workers to mature, safe, and productive members of society. That is the challenge to the supervisor of young employees—to make safety alive and part of living for young workers.



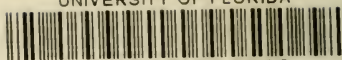
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**BUREAU OF LABOR STANDARDS**  
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